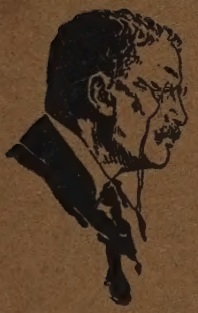
HIS SOUL GOES MARCHING ON



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AUTHOR OF "THE PERFECT TRIBUTE"

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BY MARY R. S. ANDREWS

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THE COUNSEL ASSIGNED

THE COURAGE OF THE COMMONPLACE

THE LIFTED BANDAGE

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CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

HIS SOUL GOES MARCHING ON

"IT IS LITTLE MATTER WHETHER ONE MAN FAILS OR SUCCEEDS . . . BUT THE CAUSE SHALL NOT FAIL, FOR IT IS THE CAUSE OF HUMANITY"

HIS SOUL GOES MARCHING ON

BY

Mary Raymond Shipman Andrews
Author of "The Perfect Tribute"

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IT was the summer of the year 1912. A special train travelling on a political campaign trip was rushing, toward dusk, through a Western State. Lamps burned in little farmhouses as the cars roared by, and, as the secretary of the great man looked out, there in the lighted doorway of a lonely dwelling stood a group, the family, waiting to see the train pass, waving a flag. A mile farther and another farmhouse flashed, another little group saluted the flying train and the man it carried, though they knew well that he would not see them nor they him. On through the night, and in the gray of the morning, the people were up along the way, these friends whom he never saw and never was to see, one loyal little company after another, giving him their benediction.

It was at the breakfast-table that the young secretary made his suggestion. "Because of cutting out Wellsville and Cherokee and the places between, sir," the secretary said, "we're now doing the hypoteneuse of a triangle. That puts us a day ahead of schedule."

Keen eyes shot back a glance like a blow; the brows drew and the jaws clamped as if the entire force of brain were bent to consider this statement.

The secretary went on. "If we could side-track the train somewhere in the country——"

A clenched fist came down with a whack. "Good for you, Roly!" the personage cried out, and the tense face beamed. "Great! I could go for a tramp and scramble over some of this scenery. Simply immense! I was wondering how I could worry along another day without exercise." He turned and stared through the car window at the flying landscape. "It's really very nice country," he

said, and struck the breakfast-table another friendly blow, as it might be out of pure high spirits. "Get them to shunt us off somewhere in the wilds where there won't be fussiness and crowds. You go ahead and arrange that, Roly."

At about the hour when the secretary had looked out upon the darkening country and watched, with a stir of emotion, the tribute of the plain people, Americans all, waiting through the long night at their doors to do honor to the mere flashing past of the train which bore the greatest American—at about that hour, miles farther along the train's route, in a country town, a red-headed boy who wore spectacles was much occupied. He sprawled over the floor of a living-room where there was worn furniture and many books; he was surrounded by and absorbed in fishing-tackle; about him lay a light rod in sections, reels, coils of line, a book of flies, all old and much used, but all, it might be seen as he touched one or the other, objects of

reverence. Across the room, by a table where a light burned and magazines were piled, a man and a woman talked. Their faces were grave.

"It's no small decision," the woman spoke.

The man recapitulated. "If I can't pay the debts I can't go back to Washington. And I've done well in the House, Annie. There's a career before me. The bills I'm hoping to get passed—they're important to the country. I want to put them through, Annie, for their own usefulness—for the people. It isn't mere selfishness."

The woman reflected. "Five thousand dollars," she said.

"Yes," the man caught her up eagerly. "Five thousand. Enough to pay all our debts and start us straight again. And what is it I've got to do—a mere nothing!"

"Is it nothing?" the woman asked. "Isn't it a good deal to sell your honor?"

"Don't talk cant," the man threw back. "Edwin Pierce wants his boy to go to West

Point. I'm a Congressman; it's worth five thousand dollars to him if I give the boy the nomination. Why not young Eddie Pierce as well as some other boy? Edwin Pierce is rolling in millions. Five thousand means nothing to him. But it means a lot to us."

The woman flung forward and clasped his arm with passion. "Tom, don't! Don't! It's dishonest. Your name's clean. Isn't that worth five thousand dollars? You're an official of the nation. You'd lower the flag. Is all of Edwin Pierce's money worth that? Young Eddie Pierce is a good-for-nothing. You know he'd never make a fit officer. It's our honesty—mine as well as yours—Jimmie's. You haven't any right to sell our honor, Jimmie's and mine."

His face darkened. "As if I wasn't doing it for you and Jimmie! It's his future—what I can do for him if I make a name. You can't see that I'm straining this point for you, and for the boy's future."

The boy on the floor, unnoticed, had

dropped the reel which he had been studying with careful tenderness, and for the last minute had listened, wide-eyed. "For the boy's future," his father ended. And the boy tossed up his red head. "I don't want any future," he stated, "if it's dishonest, like mother says."

"You see, Annie," the man threw into the startled silence. "You're setting the child to condemn his father."

With that the big lad was upon him, his arm around his father's neck. "Aw gee—no, dad!" he remonstrated. "*I* don't condemn *you*, dad. No. Mother doesn't, either."

The man smiled up at the sturdy youngster. "Do you love me, Jimmie?" he asked, a bit brokenly.

"Oh, I *do!*" was flung back fervently. "But, dad, mother knows if it's wrong. It's usually best to do what mother says."

The man's hand reached out and enclosed the woman's as they laughed together. "It usually is," he agreed, "but yet—go back to

the fishing-tackle, Jimmie. Look out you don't lose that multiplying reel to-morrow, young man, or break the rod. That's my pet old reel, and it s a Leonard rod. I couldn't afford to replace either now." He sighed. "Annie, we'll sleep over it. I'm afraid I've got to do it. I've got to go back to Washington. The whole future of all of us lies that way."

"We won't discuss it to-night, Tom," the woman said. "Come out in the garden. The peonies are in bloom."

The red-headed boy, left alone on the floor with his tackle, pondered.

. . . . . .

It happened, as set forth above, that of a Saturday afternoon in 1912 a special train bearing distinguished freight was laid by, while no one in the State of Kansas was aware, on the tracks outside a country station. And with that the great man was suddenly nowhere to be found; only the white-jacketed negro porter reported:

"I see him makin' tracks down de road by de woods, sah, over yander, when we wa'n't mo'n come to a stop," reported the porter.

And the secretary and the others laughed. "He wanted to get off alone," they decided.

Down the road by the woods over yonder, where the vigorous figure had disappeared, a stream ran, following the highway, talking over shallows, declaiming hoarse, sweet sentiments around boulders; smiling and brown and sun-spotted, halting in pools where fish lay. Till it crossed the road under a rustic bridge, and there, shady but with shaking rifts of sunlight, widened into its biggest pool. White foam tumbled into it from a rapid, and a rock stood in the middle, and on the rock was a red-headed boy who wore spectacles, fishing.

The personage, arresting his headlong flight at the bridge, looked down and saw him; likely there was no more finished expert in boys in America than the personage. This one did not notice the observer. His trousers,

of a home-made model, were rolled above the knees and one dangling bare foot wiggled toes in and out of the water. He stuck his tongue, also, in and out, as he drew in and proceeded to untangle the mess into which he had managed to involve, by one unhappy cast, his leader. For the boy was fishing with flies; a swift gray glance, which missed few things, took in that fact with surprise. Little country lads mostly wield a pole, not a four-ounce rod, such as this boy's, and mostly cast a hook of brutality, baited with wriggling worm, into their pools of adventure. By a single leap of intuition there was a father constructed for this boy, of finer clay than common fathers in the up-country of the West, a father who knew a rod from a pole, a Brown Hackle or a Parmachene Belle from a writhing bait; who had so instructed his offspring that the latter might be trusted alone with a good rod and—yes—a multiplying reel, and a six-foot leader, and a braided silk line. In sixty seconds of observation, from

eyes which had studied with equal closeness the ways of sparrows and of lions, much was known of antecedents and character and habits of this unconscious specimen. Meantime the boy stuck out his tongue and splashed his toes and frowned as his fingers fumbled at the tangles in the leader.

"Good day, there!" dropped the personage over the bridge.

The foot stopped its up-and-down motion, the tongue withdrew to quarters, and Jimmie looked up. "Good day, sir," came a civil answer.

The greeting was coated with reserve of boyhood, exactly as it should be. Such civility, such decent awkwardness of youth was what the personage expected from the upbringing he had arranged for that boy; Five-ounce rod and budding fly-fisherman; if a naturalist may successfully build a prehistoric monster from one jaw-bone, the personage reflected, with satisfaction, it was fitting that the human animal he had put to-

gether from a rod and a reel and a cast of flies should turn out according to specifications.

"You're in a scrape. Hold on a minute. I'll come and help."

He was scrambling down the bank, while the boy, undisturbed, merely threw a glance and went on at his Sisyphus labor of the leader.

"Get your feet wet, sir, if you try to jump it," he advised briefly.

But Jimmie was talking to a man whose rule on many a tramp had been "over or through." The personage, seated on a log, was now taking off correct but superfluous shoes and stockings. Jimmie's sidelong glance was supremely non-committal, yet had there been a secretary of Jimmie's interior his report would have been approval for this stranger who was, evidently, as good a sport as a boy. With that the personage, his nether raiment disposed above his knees, even as Jimmie's, and his coat on the log, waded out.

"What's your name, boy?"

"Jimmie," said Jimmie.

"Hand over that mess and I'll grapple with it, Jimmie."

The curly snells and the flies and that twisting ray of pearly light the leader, which had begun to appear an organization of diabolical intelligence to Jimmie's thirteen-year-old fingers, slowly let go each other under a masterful touch.

"Thank you," Jimmie pronounced gravely, trying, as boys forever will, to show by no word or sign his extreme admiration of the efficiency of the untangler.

But the man understood boys. He knew well enough, though probably he gave it small thought, that one of the most wonderful personalities of history had found no trouble in hitting the entrance to the trail which led to that hidden thing, a boy's heart. He knew, also, that only undeviating reality might keep him in that narrow path. It seemed worth while to the million-faceted

mind, on this stolen day in June, to find the way, and come in as a comrade, and touch with understanding this out-of-the-way little life which, bare-legged and home-tailored, still held, inexplicably, an atmosphere; which was, even lacking that, the life of a young American. To the personage that word, perhaps, crowned the head of the humblest who honestly wore it.

"Go ahead and pull out a fish," he advised, when at last the leader, with its dim flies, trembled, an intermittent beam above the foam-specked pool. But the lad passed the rod butt across a huckleberry bush.

"You take a try," he offered.

"Thank you. But I don't want to break up your fishing." The personage treated the red-headed boy with distinguished courtesy.

"Oh, take a try," the boy insisted. "I wouldn't mind, really. It's a dandy rod—it's my father's. It's a real Leonard rod."

"Well," said the personage, "fishing isn't

my pet crime, but as it's a real Leonard rod——"

The boy watched, a close critic, as the man's hand gripped the butt and shot its fairy weight of line over the water.

"Look out for the recover," he advised with fatherly circumspection. "Some pesky bushes right there. You have to be careful."

"Oh!" answered the personage. His eyes appeared to scintillate behind their glasses.

"Be sure and don't whack the tip," Jimmie suggested further. "You're not so awfully used to fishing, are you? It's a real Leonard rod, and my father won't let me take it only when I fish alone. He says he won't have any wild Indians practising with it. He says he couldn't afford to buy another if it smashed."

"Oh!" was again the response of the personage. "It would never do for me to be a wild Indian under the circumstances, would it? This is really great fun," he added joyfully, and threw a glance over his shoulder to

make sure that the recover cleared the pesky bushes.

"You handle a good deal of line," Jimmie's voice arose from where he squatted at the water's edge, regarding with expert eye every breath the stranger drew as custodian of the Leonard rod. "You're carefuller than the boys," he went on, "but I don't know if you're qu-ite as careful as me. You see, the tip breaks awfully easy of these Leon— Hi!" Jimmie was a tense bunch of excitement. "Aw, gee!" scornfully. "A fish rose. If you hadn't splashed the water with the flies you'd sure have taken a fish. A good one, too; three-quarters of a pound."

"If he was exactly three-quarters of a pound you did uncommonly quick weighing," commented the personage. "You'd better take the rod now. It's a first-class rod and I've enjoyed it immensely. But it's not a square deal to butt into another man's fishing. What's that bird?"

The stranger, depositing the rod in Jim-

mie's reverent hand, was staring into the big cottonwood tree which overhung their rock. A long note and then another, holding all the drowsiness of the hot day, liquid, lonely, crystally sweet, drifted out above them. The personage, shielding his eyes, stared into the foliage.

Jimmie shunted a casual side glance and made answer. "Green-eyed vireo. He's always here when I fish. There's an oriole comes, too. Here's the way he whistles." From Jimmie's mouth came a bird-call as accurate as if he had passed his days in tree-tops.

The personage turned a swift glance on the slim figure. "This is great! I've caught a young naturalist," he shot out—but at this juncture all other interests went down in sudden upheaval of the main event of a fisherman's existence.

"Gee!" brought out Jimmie passionately. "Don't talk! Holy Mike! I've got two on at once." Jimmie was a competent fisherman.

Not without result had his father put a rod into his baby hands and trained him, these six years now, in subtleties of the craft. Very proud he was, under the eye of this stranger who had dropped from the skies, this stranger who had fascinated him as no other human being had done in his thirteen years, to show competency. After an anxious ten minutes the slashing and pulling, the runs and doublings back, the clean two-foot jumps into air, so dangerous to success and to rod, slackened. Jimmie, with art, drew the shining, slapping things toward the rock.

"The net there—you land 'em," he issued orders from his vantage as hero. "Down there, sir, close—aw, gee! On your knees! You'll miss 'em if you lean over. Never mind the water. We can't lose these fish."

Laughter flashed from behind the glasses; then the personage dropped on his bare knees in a wash of cold brown water and wielded the net above the slowly approaching bass.

"Wet the net. Take the one on the hand

fly first," commanded Jimmie in terrible tones.

The wet net swooped down, up—twice—and in it each time was a kicking black bass. Landed.

Jimmie let forth a whoop.

"Gee! I feel as if I'd done the work of two men for a week," he announced. He proceeded to break the necks of the fish and to take them off the flies, caught in the meshes of the landing-net. "One of 'em took the Brown Hackle and one the Montreal. I'll remember to tell dad." He glanced up. "Thank you for landing 'em. You did it all right. At least it came out right," he added, not to be fulsome in praise. Then Jimmie asked a question. "Is there," he asked, with a straight, sweet boy glance into the stranger's face, "is there anything that you do better than fishing?"

The man shot a look, direct as an arrow from a bow, at Jimmie's sincere eyes, and broke into laughter which shook his body.

Brilliant rows of teeth glittered; Jimmie was struck by the whole-souled assistance of those white teeth in the business of laughing; it seemed to him he had never seen so many teeth in any mouth. He got an answer as straight from the shoulder as his question.

"Yes." The personage was speaking in an odd falsetto, carrying a bubbling humor which suddenly made Jimmie laugh also, at what he was not sure. "Yes, you scamp. I do several things much better; extremely well, I may say. I can shoot a bear or even a lion really very nicely."

"Huh." Jimmie was doubtful about that statement. Sometimes people thought it clever to lie to boys. "My Uncle Jim was in Canada and *he* killed a cannibal," stated Jimmie, not to be outdone.

"A what?" The falsetto note again.

Jimmie looked up. "Isn't it? Like a reindeer."

"Caribou," corrected the stranger, as one sportsman to another.

Jimmie was not hurt, but became silent, plunged in reflection. "I *thought* mother said cannibal, and mother always knows," he reasoned. "But maybe I heard wrong. Maybe you're right."

"I am," the stranger announced. A firm jaw snapped on the words.

Jimmie, fondling his dead fish, risked a flier.

"Were you jokin' about killin' lions?"

"No, I have killed lions. And bears. And wolves. I could give you blood-curdling information which would, I think, meet your approval about big-game shooting."

"Huh?"

And with that ensued such an entrancing quarter of an hour as this red-headed lad had never hoped to pass. Vaguely the young mind recognized the unphrased fact that the stranger, dangling bare legs beside Jimmie's bare legs, talking in incisive, explosive sentences, was of an unknown variety. Reluctantly, as boys come to an emotional con-

dition, there surged within him a feeling powerful, mastering, unchristened of Jimmie, known to the sophisticated as hero-worship. This man took as much trouble to talk to Jimmie, only thirteen, and not expecting attention from grown-ups, as if Jimmie were the governor. And what a man! The lad's eyes were glued on the mustached mouth, from whence issued incredible words, as if he feared the escape of a fraction of a syllable, as if he dared not trust ears alone with this tremendous guard duty. What a man! He had done everything that made life worth living; he had killed a list of animals before which a decent circus might hide its head. Listen to this man!

"Did the wolf-hunter really stick his hand down the wolf's throat?" Jimmie gasped.

"My dear fellow, exactly. He was really a wonderful chap. One run was nine miles. At the end he caught the wolf alive by thrusting his gloved hands down its jaws so it couldn't bite. He then tied up this wolf

and held it on the saddle, and followed his dogs in a seven-mile run, and helped kill another wolf."

"Oh!" Jimmie brought out in rapt tones; "I do wish my father was a wolf-catcher. I'd like him better."

"This will never do," objected the man, and the falsetto note broke into his voice. "I mustn't sow seeds of discontent in a family circle."

Jimmie was uncertain as to what that might mean. Nothing to do with lions and wolves, probably, and his mind now moved with such. "Tell me one more about your killing a lion," he pleaded. "You, not the others."

And the man told. "So that I bagged that day two lions and a rhinoceros," the tale ended.

It was three breathless minutes later and Jimmie's eyes still watched the man's mouth if haply more—even one or two more—of these hypnotic words might come out of it.

"Oh!" he sighed, "that's—fine. Father's promised me a rifle. But only a twenty-two Fontenoy," he admitted with wistful honesty. "I suppose a boy couldn't shoot a lion with a twenty-two, could he? Or even a wolf?"

The head on its powerful bull neck shook with decision. "No. A twenty-two is too light for big game. But it's splendid for partridges and such gentry. And that teaches you shooting. I wouldn't get a Fontenoy. Tell your father to look at a little Winchester or a Remington."

"I will," the boy assured him eagerly. Then the bright face was serious. "I'm not sure he can get it. He said if he could afford it. And last night he said he needed the money so much, the five thousand dollars."

The stranger's face was puzzled but kindly. He regretted that this good sort of boy, born a sportsman and a naturalist, should be done out of his little rifle.

The boy's voice slipped on. "If dad takes

the five thousand dollars I think he'll get me the rifle, but mother says it wouldn't be honest."

One must stop the betrayal of family secrets; but the voice slipped on. "It's that rich Mr. Pierce who wants to pay dad five thousand dollars to give Eddie Pierce the nomination to West Point. Eddie Pierce is no good," stated the boy. "He's mean. And —he drinks whiskey. I saw him." Jimmie whispered the last.

The stranger listened now.

"Mother said," the lad went on—and it seemed the young mind was sharing a burden with this strong helper—"mother said if father did it he'd lower the flag. That's awful," Jimmie commented.

"Awful, indeed," the stranger agreed gravely. "Jimmie, what's your father? A Congressman?"

Jimmie nodded, closing his lips tightly as if not to be too proud. "Uh-huh." The freckled face sobered. "He says he can't go

back to Washington if he doesn't take Mr. Pierce's five thousand dollars. He's got debts. That's the same as owing money, isn't it?"

The appealing small face lifted to the strong frowning one.

"Yes, Jimmie." It was said gently, but the man's mind was evidently busy considering something. There was silence for a minute—two minutes. Jimmie slid forward and splashed his toe. "Jimmie," the stranger brought out, "your father must not take that money from Mr. Pierce. We mustn't let him, you and I."

Jimmie stopped splashing. The man beside him had risen, and above the upturned red head, across the shimmering water of the pool, were rolling out words which the boy, not altogether understanding, drank in and stored away, and brought out many a day long after, when his mind had grown to contain their thought.

"The question of the quality of the individual citizen is supreme; it means the suc-

cess or failure of the country, and the success of republics like ours means the glory, and our failure the despair of mankind."

The ringing words shifted into a conversational, yet still a serious, tone. "Jimmie," he addressed the lad, and the lad regarded his new friend with a feeling mixed of comfort and awe. "Jimmie, you must tell your father a thing for me. Tell him he must stop, *now*, before he takes another step, and realize that for winning success in life character counts most. Tell him that his honor as a United States official is the honor of our nation. Can you remember that, Jimmie? Say it over."

Stumbling at first, but after a lesson or two well enough, Jimmie repeated the words.

"Your mother is right. Mothers mostly are. Fathers are splendid, but merely vice-mothers. Your mother is right. It *is* her honor and yours that your father would throw away if he took the five thousand dollars. And his own self-respect." The impetuous voice went on, biting out sentences. "He could never

hold up his head again if he did that." The man's clenched right fist drew back and came down with a clap into his left palm. "Nothing would hire me to accept even the presidency if I had to take it on terms which would mean a forfeiting of self-respect." The man shot it out, partly at Jimmie, partly at the universe.

"And mother said," added Jimmie, nodding his head with endorsement, "that it wasn't patriotic, and it was"—Jimmie's voice dropped at the tremendous words—"disloyal to the flag."

"Good for your mother! She's raising her boy to be a soldier, if need comes. That's the American spirit, Jimmie—stick to it." Again the man's eyes went past Jimmie's devouring gaze. "The flag of America!" he spoke, and his soft hat was whipped off and crushed with a wide gesture against a broad chest. Then he shot out words hot, impulsive, measured, inspired: "The long fight for righteousness," he spoke loudly, as if a multitude listened,

and larger issues than the boy knew were before those vision-seeing eyes. "It is little matter whether one man fails or succeeds," he said, "but the cause shall not fail, for it is the cause of humanity."

There was a tense silence. Only a minute it lasted, but the awed boy never forgot the figure standing there, the hat crushed against his breast, the eyes seeing far things. Everyday tones broke the spell. "I've had such a good time, Jimmie," announced the stranger, "that I feel like throwing up my hands and going to the circus. You're a trump to let me fish with the Leonard rod. I hope I didn't hurt it."

Vigorous fingers pushed back the red locks that hung over Jimmie's eyebrows, and the keen eyes behind the glasses, suffused and softened with a look of fatherliness, gazed at the young face. "It's into the hands of such as you that the empire will pass. Love America, and work for her, Jimmie, and fight for her if need comes."

The beloved stranger had turned, and was wading back across the stream, and the lad watched speechless as the shoes and stockings were rapidly put on, a heavy-hearted lad to lose this presence which so filled the horizon, which seemed necessary now to the well-being of the world.

"Good-by, Jimmie."

From the bridge above, whence his voice had first come, only an hour ago, he was waving a farewell, and the boy looked up, and his eyes followed the figure which turned and went off into the shadows, and he did not know, then, that the greatest American of all had come into his life and gone out of it.

Shortly Jimmie stood, as one carrying responsibility, before his father, and gave his message.

"I don't get you," objected his father. "Who said all this?"

"The man."

"What man?"

"A strange man who fished with me."

"Did you tell some strange man—about—Mr. Pierce?"

Jimmie nodded. "Yes, dad."

His father's face darkened. "I thought I could trust you to hold your tongue."

Jimmie turned scarlet; tears were not distant. "You *can* trust me. But this man was different."

"What man was he?"

Jimmie shook his head. "He came."

"Came from where?"

"Over the bridge at Hurrah Pool."

"What was he like?"

Jimmie considered. "Like an army with banners," he said.

"What does the child mean?"

"Give him time," the child's mother advised. "They read that in church Sunday, and he kept saying it all the way home. 'An army with banners.' It took his fancy. He means something special, I think. Give him time."

Jimmie cast a grateful look. "Mother always understands."

His father came back to the point. "What was his name? Where did he come from? What did he look like?"

Jimmie answered the last question. He settled himself squarely on his feet, sank his head so that his slim neck took on a solid air, shoved his spectacles back over his ears, drew back his lower lip till all his teeth showed.

"Love—America—and work for her—Jimmie. And fight for her if need comes."

Jimmie bit out his imitation of a manner so characteristic, so unmistakable, that the world recognizes the most unskilled version. He lifted his right fist and dealt a smashing blow into his left palm.

"That's what he's like. Oh—" Jimmie mourned forlornly. "I hate him to go."

The man turned an amazed glance at his wife. "It's Roosevelt," he said.

"But the train wasn't to stop here," the boy's mother argued.

"It must have stopped," said the man. "There's no question whom the boy is copy-

ing. It was like him to give an hour to a child; like him to send me the message." Jimmie's father's face worked with emotion. For years Theodore Roosevelt had been his hero. "Tell me everything he said."

And Jimmie, with much questioning, managed to tell almost everything.

"If I take that money, I can never hold up my head again. Roosevelt said it," the man spoke when the tale ended. "T. R. It settles it, Annie. I knew all along. But—I couldn't see. Now I see with his eyes—the Colonel's—eyes that never yet saw wrong look right. We'll manage, Annie. I won't sell your honor and the boy's. I'll hold up my head with honest men."

"Oh, dad," mourned Jimmie, absorbed in his own loss, draping himself over the back of the sofa where the two sat shaken with a crisis of their lives. "Oh, dad, if I'm the best American ever, don't you suppose I could shoot something with him some day?"

And Jimmie's wildest dreams could not

have compassed how utterly he would be proving himself American, or what game he would be in the way to shoot when he saw Roosevelt again.

. . . . . .

On April 6, 1917, the United States of America declared war against Germany. On the 8th, when a recruiting station was opened in the town of Silverford, a tall, broad, red-headed young fellow walked in and presented himself, the first man, for enlistment. Shortly after, the old Scotchman, in charge of the recruiting station, laughed at him.

"Take off your glasses and read the optical-test chart," said the Scotchman.

The boy laughed too, but shamefacedly. He could not read the big letter at the top fifteen feet away.

"You might do in the ambulance service," the old Scot suggested kindly, "or there'd be a clerkship in the Q. M. C." The boy was biting his lip so savagely that the recruiting

officer feared he was going to cry. Eager for fighting, right enough, now they were in it, these Americans.

Jimmie swung around and out. He saw nothing and nobody in the streets as his long legs covered the ground toward home. He let himself into the house, and a minute later locked the door of his room inside and dropped into a chair and covered his face with his hands, and sat so a long time. If the Scotch sergeant had been present and a mind-reader, he would have had a shock. For Jimmie, biting his lip still, appalled, ashamed, yet knew that his soul was singing a pæan of joy. Two months back his mother had said:

"If war comes, I want you to be the first to go. You needn't have one troubled thought for me, boy. I couldn't bear it if you weren't fighting."

All over America boys' mothers were saying such words. Perhaps it was one reason that America's four million soldiers were known as a singing army. Jimmie murmured

something about "a peach," and kissed her and went away. And from that till the morning he marched into the recruiting station it had been one long, sickening effort not to let his mother know—not to let any one know—the thing that was eating his heart out. For he held the fact before him and faced it, that he was afraid. Not afraid to be shot or to die; afraid of the long horror and filth and suffering of war; afraid of standing shivering and wet, with throbbing feet, in the trenches; of lying out wounded in No Man's Land, with a hot sun blazing, and the torture of flies; afraid of the sights of agony of men and horses; of falling into the hands of savages, of prison camps, of slavery in mines; a moving picture of hideous possibilities swept day and night across the background of his mind; Jimmie was blessed and cursed with imagination. And his mother, watching, knew that the depths were stirred, and out of her own courage read him wrong.

"Jimmie," she spoke, "you're wearing

yourself out with longing to go. Don't grudge the last weeks at home, dear—it won't be long now till they're needing volunteers. Then I, who gave you your life, I'll tell you not to spare it. I'm proud because you're eager—to pay with your body for your soul's desire. The Colonel said that—you remember it, Jimmie?" She was silent a moment, while the boy, his head bent low, stroked her hand. Then, "I've thought," she went on, "how glad Roosevelt would be to know that the boy with whom he went fishing that June day had made the sort of man he wants American boys to make." Her voice choked. "He'd be glad of the sort you are, Jimmie."

After that what was there for a boy who wished ever to hold up his head? Without the spur of the bold longing for adventure which pitched most of our lads heedless, unrealizing, into war, this boy was sick at heart for the lack which he felt in himself, and by sheer will set himself to do his duty to his country.

"Maybe I'm a coward," considered Jimmie. "I don't know. I loathe getting into that mess. Yet I needn't be a slacker. I can go through the motions. I can serve—somehow."

So, in all good faith, he had gone to enlist the moment the recruiting station opened. And had been refused. And then had reached home to hide his joy behind closed doors, till he might show a decently sober face.

On the wall above his writing-table hung a framed photograph—a head set on a bull neck, with keen eyes in deep lines; the aggressive, grim, scholarly, intense face of Theodore Roosevelt. Jimmie looked at it a long time. The direct gaze of the pictured eyes made the face seem alive. His thoughts went to an unforgotten afternoon five years ago, and, staring at the portrait, he felt the thrill of that electric personality which had swayed millions, which had held a child spellbound. Words came to him not much understood when heard, standing out now to the older boy, conspicuous of meaning. "It is little

matter whether one man fails or succeeds, but the cause shall not fail, for it is the cause of humanity."

The boy had found these words again in print and had written them under the portrait. They faced him now. The head seemed to push toward him, thrusting forward the words. "The cause of humanity"—it was this war—this crusade.

"I tried to get in, Colonel," Jimmie spoke aloud, and the picture looked back, expectant. "They turned me down for bad eyes," the boy explained. The face regarded him. "Oh, don't—don't be hard. You were afraid of things once," the boy flung up at him. "You said so in the autobiography."

Silently the answer came formed in the boy's own mind, scintillating from that grim face. "I conquered my fear," spoke the picture.

"But, oh—I can't." He flung his arms out and his head dropped into them on the table.

He raised his head and stared at the soul-

searching eyes. They waited yet, the eyes of Roosevelt, and the boy read again the words written below: "The cause shall not fail, for it is the cause of humanity." A door opened into a new consciousness. "The cause"—why, that was the whole trick. What matter if he were afraid or not, if he loathed war or not. In his hands lay a millionth, a four millionth of power to make the cause triumph. By what right should he withhold it, a son of America with a fraction of America's honor in his keeping? What he did counted, not how he felt—that was the whole question. Jimmie sprang to his feet and saluted—awkwardly, for he was no soldier yet—the lion head.

"I will, Colonel. God and you helping me, I will. You've got me around the worst corner of my life, T. R., our own big T. R."—he spoke slowly, and his look gleamed mistily at the photograph. "I'll get into the fighting. I'll do my bit, Colonel—I'm promising. You'll never know, but you'll maybe be proud of

American boys; I'll be in on that." The stirred face softened suddenly into wistfulness. "If I'm scared stiff under my skin, that won't count, will it, Colonel? Not if I put it across? You'd forgive that to a chap who's doing his darnedest, wouldn't you, sir?"

"That settles it," said his father, when the verdict of the recruiting station was reported.

Jimmie laughed. "Well, no," he said. "I thought so myself at first, but I got talking to the Colonel up in my room, and he stumped me to get in anyhow. So I'm going to."

His father demurred. "You've offered yourself. You're disqualified; why not let it go at that? You're quite justified in taking now a safer service. And it isn't as if men were lacking. There are millions ready to go."

"Of whom I'm one," stated Jimmie.

His mother's eyes, grave, loving, lifted. "You're right, you and the Colonel," she considered. "Tom, we won't hold him. It's more than his life, it's his character. The

Colonel's hand is in it. Likely all over America there are boys rushing to enlist, like Jimmie, with the thought of him in their minds. He's like a trumpet calling."

"Like an army with banners," spoke Jimmie reminiscently, and smiled at his mother.

Jimmie's father nodded. "He's our fighting man. He's never missed a chance to sow Americanism, and the seed is springing khaki-colored. *The* American, past or present," finished Jimmie's father devoutly. And added: "If you and the Colonel have settled it, boy, go to it."

. . . . . .

The lad schemed and struggled and pulled wires to get into a fighting unit, hindered by defective vision, until at last the draft gave him his chance; an order came in from Washington authorizing limited acceptance of men using glasses. Then it was a boy running down the familiar street toward the station, looking back at his mother, who smiled and waved, and felt blood dropping out of her

veins, and an aching emptiness unbearable—and smiled and waved. Then it was a camp life with plenty of excitement and comrades of sorts, who mostly amused him, for the lad was a good mixer—from the descendant of English earls, whose decorative real name was transformed into "Strawberry Trousers" to Weeney the Pole, Weeney a soldier by heredity of seven hundred years. The proper name of him was beyond Anglo-Saxon tongues, and as he stretched inches over six feet, Teeny-weeney seemed fitting to call him. His hair was a blue-black plume, his chin pretty as a girl's, his mouth red, and a fierce spirit looked out of his eagle eyes. There was also Sergeant Egan, a regular, his face saddle-tanned by desert sun, his eye-pockets full of fine lines, from focussing long on distances; a strong six-footer Egan, whose black hair curled in a whirl at the base of his skull. A smart soldier, but not dapper, was Egan, and looking over Jimmie he found him good, and proceeded to be a mother to

him. Hundreds of others there were, and the boy discovered to his relief that his rushing day held no time for reflecting on the horrors of war, and whether one was a hero or a coward. To be up on the dot, to get through drills and hikes and unheard-of duties by the dozen, to eat and sleep and rise again at break of day and go through the routine, and gradually, as swiftly as possible, come to be a soldier, these filled all the minutes of any day. On cards which were given the new soldiers to sign in the camp he registered himself as wishing to go into the infantry. That, it appeared to the boy who knew how fear felt, was the completest form of keeping a word given to a photograph on a wall. A tremor shook something vital inside as Jimmie filled out that fateful card, but he wrote along, unhesitating. With that he seemed to feel strong fingers push back his hair with gentle roughness as a voice said words:

"Love America, Jimmie; fight for her if need comes."

"I'm promising you, Colonel," whispered Jimmie, and put his name on the card.

Camp days fled, and now the Division was in such shape that a day was set when it was to march up Fifth Avenue in all its fresh efficiency, through crowds gathered by thousands and tens of thousands. The great of the land were to be there to review them, and Colonel Roosevelt would be one among these. No young lover ever looked forward to a sight, a glimpse, of his sweetheart as did Jimmie, a corporal now, to the second of time when he might turn his eyes and see, after five years, that unforgotten face. There would be a crowd of notables on the reviewing-stand; might he not, in the second of passing, swept on in that unending march, miss the one figure? He shivered. And then he knew that he could not miss him; no one ever missed seeing Roosevelt. "Where the McGregor sits is the head of the table." Jimmie took comfort.

The day came. Fifth Avenue, the "Avenue

of the Allies," was gay with sunshine and bunting, and thrilling with the atmosphere which Fifth Avenue, more than all streets of America, can send throbbing through the veins of those who are a part of her on her glad and solemn feast days. To-day was both glad and solemn. The lads, America's children, had answered her call with a will; but to what were they going, and how many of these splendid boys would tread again her pavement? The long, stately road pulsed with the two thoughts. Up the wide way they swept, company after company, regiment after regiment; officers stern-eyed, proud, holding in their nervous mounts; endless lines of such manhood as no other land may show, treading their first long mile to France, sweeping up steadily, holding the wide street from curb to curb. And far up the avenue, if one had vision, might well have been seen a mighty figure rising, of gallant young America, the mother of us all, towering beyond the high roofs, arms out-

stretched toward these, her best blood, given for "the cause."

Among the thousands marched Jimmie, in the shining ranks, and one thought obsessed him—would he surely see the colonel? Soldiers with their eyes front are, after all, human men and see much. Sunshine on church steeples far up the avenue; endless stir and shifting of color on endless masses of people; windows, roofs, galleries overflowing with figures; flutter of hats and of handkerchiefs; the upward lift of the mighty crowd as the flag passed—Jimmie saw these. He heard the indescribable sound of a crowd, he caught the silences, he heard the roar of voices, cheering, cheering the soldiers, America's own. Then he knew that the reviewing stand was near, and his pulse quickened. One moment's square look he meant to have, but only that was possible.

The order came for "eyes left," and Jimmie sharply turned his eyes, his head, and trapped a memory which was to go with him

through cold and hunger and battle-fire. Roosevelt stood in a distinguished group, at the right of the boyish, slender mayor of New York, destined to give his own life later, in service; all about were men whose faces are the A B C of the American people; admirals and generals stood at salute as the colors passed, and the Colonel swept off his hat with a gesture which the boy suddenly remembered, and held it crushed against his breast, as his face, tense with a mighty emotion, gazed out upon the marching men. It was the face of a father who sends his sons into peril; a face filled and torn with a father's tenderness and pride and love. Jimmie's hero-worshipping eyes drank in that strong, beautiful look.

"He loves us; he cares," Jimmie spoke wordlessly.

The swing of marching feet, the light, wonderful, unique swing of the American soldier, carried him past in its unbroken rhythm. But from that moment a loving,

undaunted soul went marching up the avenue, side by side with the beat of those buoyant feet. Many a time in France, among the unspoken things which lay back in the consciousness of those thousands of boys, the beautiful avenue, gay with sunshine, gorgeous with banners, scintillating with humanity, returned to them and in its foreground stood out the face typical more than any other of America, and the face brought comfort.

Egan and Weeney and the rest stopped saying, "This ain't no man's war," after a while. It was clear that it was a war for strong men, and lucky ones at that. "Let's go," was one of their pet slogans; they dropped it later. They were going fast enough. They were a dumb lot, like many of the rougher sort of the army; they spoke in catchwords, in slang phrases, expressive enough mostly, or they spoke facts; beyond this talking was an unknown art. Jimmie, who knew language, was a relaxation for them. "Talk to us, Blair," they would say, on a march it might be, or

when they fell out to rest, or camped of an evening in some crowded barn, or in a chilly wood, or, later, in the worse chill of old trenches. And Jimmie would tell stories out of history, out of science, out of romance, to eager ears. It was a new and entrancing world, the world of literature in fact, opening to Kentucky mountaineers, to miners from Colorado, to boys from New York's slums, the Rainbow lot who were Jimmie's "buddies."

On a night before an advance they were lying sprawled over straw, in a big building which had been a factory. So comfortable were they that they grew reminiscent. Somebody spoke of the march up the avenue on that summer day back in another world.

"I seen Teddy," stated a boy off a ranch in Nevada. "I seen him plain."

"You go to hell," adjured Strickland, the readiest fighter of the unit. "I seen him too. Us all seen him. He's all right, is Teddy." Aggressively. Strick felt so fit that he rather hoped some one would disagree, that

he might have the pleasure of punching his face in. But no one did, so he wandered on, trusting to find trouble. "Seein' ain't much. Hearin' him talk's the thing. Nobody here ain't heard him."

"I have," asserted Jimmie.

"You lie," Egan flung at him pleasantly, speaking quickly, before Strickland got it out. If Strickland said, "You lie," Jimmie would have to fight him; from Egan the words were brotherly affection.

Strickland, surprisingly, decided not to be truculent. "Huh. How'd you hear him? In a hall?" he asked with almost civil interest.

Jimmie shook his head. "It's a story," he said. At that there were calls in deep, rough young voices from all about.

"Tell it!"

"Tell us the story, Blair!"

"Talk to us, Reddy Blair!" came the voices.

So Jimmie told this crowd of rough men in uniform, sprawled about the straw over the

floor of the big bare building, by no light at all but pale moonlight, for they were near the front and German air-raids were imminent, about the June afternoon and the bass in Hurrah Pool, and his father's rod, and the stranger who came over the bridge and called out: "Good day there!" And the men, as Jimmie went on, lifted on their elbows, sat up here and there, and listened closely, putting in at times a rough grunt of approval, or a satisfied:

"That's him all over—that's Teddy!"

As he finished there was silence, and Jimmie knew, astonished, that the emotion which held him had caught the men as well. A blond boy, perhaps the most profane and reckless of the outfit, leaned toward him.

"Speak it over, Reddy—what he said to you at the end."

Jimmie, realizing by how slender a thread this tense atmosphere was separated from ribaldry, repeated: "Love America and work for her. Fight for her if the need comes."

Then his breath caught suddenly, for, to his amazement, all over the place overseas caps were being drawn quietly from soldiers' heads. Weeney, the Pole, was sitting bolt upright, facing Jimmie. Through broken windows of the building moonlight streamed and touched his blue-black, glistening head; his eagle eyes glowed.

"He's our'n," growled Weeney, the man born and bred under Russia, the foreigner who could not speak clear English. "Teddy's our'n."

And the blond boy shot out a shocking oath against the powers which would not let the Colonel lead America to battle. "Hell! We'd 'a' done some swell fightin' if we'd knowed he was the skipper!"

And Egan set forth: "We'll scrap Fritzie some anyhow, maybe, before we get bumped off. Knowin' what T. R. said won't slow us up none." There was a second's pause, for Egan was held in respect in this outfit, before the blond boy, with more foul words, out of

his lifelong and only vocabulary, announced that it was time to sleep. A huge Kentuckian with a bass like the hum of bees and a slurred, sweet accent broke softly into the "S'wanee River," and voice after voice took up the song. Jimmie, suddenly finding no sound coming from his throat in the middle of a line, rolled over on the straw, and nobody saw hot tears that pushed from under his shut lashes. And the voices of the men who were going to the front to-morrow, American lads three thousand miles from America, filled the rough place with rich, subdued music as they sang on, a song about:

"How my heart grows weary
Far from de ole folks at home."

. . . . . .

They were called before daylight and had a cup of coffee. Now they were marching in a warm early dawn. The uneasy dread that slept always in the bottom of Jimmie's mind stirred and woke, and laid a cold grip on him.

Was he going to be afraid? Would he run, in spite of all he could do, as men had run whom he had heard of, when shells fell? Rifle-fire, yes; that was clean killing. Bayonets—Jimmie laughed. There was a young lieutenant who had trained Jimmie and the rest until they were bayonet specialists.

"We eat bayonets, we-uns," Strickland stated. "We-uns won't get to be killed by no bayonet."

The lieutenant was proud of the men he made, for every mother's son of them could face a bayonet without flinching. Jimmie laughed as he thought of German bayonets. No machine-made soldiers could face Peacock and his Americans.

"You'll scare the life out of anything you charge," their "louey" had told them vain-gloriously, and they believed him, vain-glorious, too.

Would his first action come like that? Jimmie wondered. He prayed it might. He believed he could race at the enemy with that

accustomed bright thing plunging ahead. He might go back and give a good account to the photograph at home, maybe, of such a fight. The Colonel's own sort of fight, too. But something turned numb inside, a manner of seasickness crawled over him as he thought of the serene, singing peril of shells, of his helplessness under them. No fighting back, no man's chance. Meantime they marched.

"Dog-goned if we won't stall in a minute," growled Higgins, the blond boy, at his side. "We're hittin' on three."

Jimmie was conscious of comfort that another man was nervous. There was a whine somewhere; he threw up his head.

"A shell, my son," explained Egan.

Jimmie tried to see the path of the whine, and somebody laughed. "You'll hear 'em again," a voice spoke.

"Will I run?" Jimmie considered. "I didn't run this time; that's something."

They began to fall closer; one heard the explosion after the whine. Jimmie turned and

looked at a cloud of earth and smoke and rocks, perhaps five hundred yards off. Higgins's fair head was bent back and he stared up. An aeroplane was over them.

"It's a Boche," some one said. "He's giving his battery our range."

They fell to marching at quick step.

"I haven't run yet." Jimmie formed the words with gray lips. And then they were in a communication trench.

The boy never remembered by just what steps the event arrived, for the rest of that morning stayed in his mind as a manner of thunderous blur, undefined, full of rolling noises, cut across by sharp sentences, orders given and obeyed. A moment came when volunteers were called for. A French detachment in attacking had overrun its objective and was cut off somewhere in front, in danger of being shelled by American guns. Men were needed to penetrate the heavy barrage between, and to send word back of the whereabouts of the French.

Jimmie, half of him wondering if the other half were mad, volunteered. And the mad half carried him forward, quiet enough outside, stunned and vague inside, moving shoulder to shoulder with Egan, to the place of terror. He was petrified with fear, but there seemed no other way. He had given a promise to do his best! This was his best. Was there any way to break a promise? To a photograph? To a mighty, unfrightened personality?

The men came toward a wall of smoke slashed with flashes of lightning, which seemed to tear the wall to pieces before it constantly closed in smoke again. The noises were terrific beyond what any human who had not heard them could dream. A thunder of background was the sum total of all the guns not close by; three kinds of punctuation there were to this pervading sound—first, the tearing of the smaller shells near; then the spaced, deep concussion of exploding heavies; then the rattling bursts of machine-guns some distance off. All this made a com-

petent hell. Jimmie stood a moment regarding this hell. It awaited him. Could he pick a path? There was none; the last tempest of shells wiped out the quiet spots of the tempest before. The only way was direct into it.

Suddenly something happened to his stomach. It had come—the limit. He was going to run. With a harsh, loud cry the last drop of courage in him put up its last struggle. For he did not turn, though he dropped flat on his face. He was aware of Egan kneeling beside him; he saw the whirl of black hair in the back of Egan's neck. Jimmie cried out:

"I'm going to run, Egan; I'm afraid."

The man turned to him with a look that Jimmie never forgot. Egan wasn't thinking about Egan at all; as plain as print Jimmie read in his eyes—an illumination of unselfishness—that what he was thinking was how he might quickest save his friend from disgrace. What master word might give Jimmie courage out of utter funk to do his duty? With Egan's own grim smile the word came:

"F'r the Colonel's sake, son — 'tis f'r Teddy. On wid ye!"

Jimmie forgot what came after. The next thing he knew he was lying in white sheets, and a cheerful voice was saying: "Take this, buddy, for sister."

The boy came straying back to a knowledge of things. His first sensation was the luxuriousness of a bed, cleanness; then gentle, capable hands, homelike tones of an American woman. Orderlies in uniform stepped softly; the hush of a long quiet room wrapped his spirit like a robe of healing. Then sharply, as if a blade of flame had stabbed into him, he remembered. The terrified crossing toward the zone of the barrage he remembered, and the supreme moment when his will had turned to water, and he had seen Egan's face and cried to it: "I'm going to run; I'm afraid" —these things he remembered. Then Egan's puzzled, anxious look, his words like a command: "Tis f'r Teddy, son. On wid ye!" That was all.

Jimmie, lying in his hospital bed, very high yet in temperature, very low in pulse, saw only one conclusion to his memories. Egan's appeal to his hero-worship of Roosevelt had failed. Either he had run away and got wounded, or else he had fainted from fear. He had broken the promise which had been his oriflamme. One way or the other he was a deserter and had earned a firing-squad with his back against a wall. Likely he would get it. When they had cured him so he could stand up to be shot. And here was this dear American girl with her hand on his pulse and loving-kindness in her eyes, bending over him as if his life were worth saving.

"Be a good boy and stop thinking, buddy," she spoke. "You got yours gloriously and we're mighty proud of you. You take this sugar pill for sister, and have a nap."

Jimmie looked away, sick at heart. What did she know about it? They said that to all the wounded, he didn't doubt. For that matter, all of them deserved it. Except himself.

He had never heard of an American who was yellow. Except himself. The blade of flame and shame twisted and he turned to the wall. And, turning, ran into something in his body as sharp almost as mental anguish.

"What's the matter with my leg," he demanded, turning back.

"We're going to save that blessed leg," the nurse answered with a steady gentleness almost, Jimmie thought, angelic. Her hand dropped cool in his. "You'll be a bit lame, buddy, but it's a miracle you'll have a leg at all. A shell wound. And you picked up some shell-shock, too. But that's all right. You'll beat that. And those legs did enough one morning to give 'em a right to go slow for ten lifetimes. You go to sleep, buddy," she whispered motherly. "Don't think about it, but just rest content that you're one of our heroes and we're all loving you."

Was the girl dreaming? "One of our heroes." A coward, a deserter.

By virtue of the sugar pill and exhaustion

he slept again for hours. It was nearly night when he woke. The hospital was an old French château, and the large drawing-room, where he lay, was now filled with white beds, and the doors were open into a wide hall, and across it was another huge room and more white beds. As he took in, with heavy eyes, this first general impression something happened.

Shaded electric lamps were lighted on tables, but the sunset still flowed through western windows, and in the strange double light a girl in the white cap and dress of a Red Cross nurse came into his vision, sunset-haloed, standing in the hall. She looked first into the hushed room where Jimmie lay and then into the hushed room across, then instantly the long halls and the great chambers crowded with suffering boys were filled with glorious sound. Anita Eddy's was a very lovely voice, and she had sent up a little prayer, standing there, that she might sing better than ever in her life for these lads who

had given so much. It was angels' music that Jimmie heard.

"Nothing too emotional," the doctor had warned her, and the first thing was the gay notes of the "Madelon":

"Pour le repos, le plaisir du militaire
Il est là-bas, à deux pas de la forêt,
Une maison, aux murs tous couverts de lierre,
Au 'Tour-du-Roux,' c'est le nom de cabaret."

They had all heard their friends the poilus sing that—the marching song of the Blue Devils, the Alpine Chasseurs, and from here and there, and then from almost all over the big rooms, young heads lifted from pillows, and deep, tired young voices joined the air of the chorus:

"La Madelon pour nous n'est pas sevère,
Quand on lui prend la taille ou la menton.
Elle rit; c'est tout le mal qu'elle sait faire.
Madelon! Madelon! Madelon!"

"Might I risk 'The Long, Long Trail'?" the girl asked when she had sung "Over

There" and a bit or two of ragtime and "Annie Laurie."

"Yes, to finish," the doctor agreed.

"There's a long, long trail a-winding
Into the land of my dreams,
Where the nightingales are singing
And the white moon beams."

The beautiful voice sent the familiar air floating through the rooms where the wounded men lay, and into the chorus, when it came, from all over floated weak, deep notes. Almost every soldier there lifted his head from his pillow a little and joined the chorus. From all the rooms down the long corridor one heard the voices, some of them very faint voices. And the girl's voice, clear and sure and unearthly sweet, carried them all, and lifted through them. Almost every soldier there sang, but not Jimmie. The knife in him cut too sharp; he knew himself too low a thing to sing with a company of men who had served the flag honorably. At that mo-

ment Jimmie would have given the rest of his life for a chance to throw it away fighting.

The wonderful voice stopped, the girl had gone, and Jimmie's gaze wandered to the window at the foot of his bed, which gave on the park. It was Saturday night and out there it was gay. The summer evenings were long and the parties early. There was a dance already going on in a building in the grounds outside and one could see it through the windows. Between times the dancers passed into the warm night. Under the electric lights of the park one could distinguish each person, could pick out uniforms and faces. Never, the boy thought idly, was a fancy-dress ball as wonderful, as stirring as this. Doctors of the hospitals were there; there were a few French officers in their horizon blue; there were Americans of sorts, single bars of lieutenants and double bars of captains on brown uniform shoulders, and a leaf or two of a major flashing past; there was an Italian in his field-gray cape; there

was a Belgian with his tasselled cap; there were Red Cross canteen workers in their dark, trim clothes; and in and out of these flashed the white uniform of the nurses with their white caps and the scarlet cross over their brows. And, behold! there was an American colonel with his arm in a sling. Jimmie noticed the silver eagles on his shoulder; he stood in the glare of a swinging electric light and he was talking to the doctor whom Jimmie knew, and with them was—why, yes, it was Jimmie's own "sister," the nurse who was an angel. He saw her smile upward toward the colonel—lucky colonel. What was that girl saying to that officer which pleased her so?

The colonel moved as he smiled back, and Jimmie, startled, realized that it was his own colonel—old Dutch Cleanser they called him for his fanatic tidiness. What the dickens was he doing here? Oh—wounded, of course—the sling. With that, all at once, the boy's small strength was at an end, and with it his

interest; the world dropped away; he fell asleep.

Next morning when he opened his eyes it was to meet the eyes of his "sister" gazing down at him with a particularly radiant smile.

"Corporal Blair, you're a lazy man. I didn't know but I'd have to wake you. There's something doing in this ward to-day. Something mighty nice; and you're necessary to the party."

Jimmie smiled back spontaneously out of his youth; he was not yet quite awake enough to have remembered. Then the accustomed stab came.

"Not likely I'm necessary to anything nice," he brought out slowly, with a shy broken-heartedness which went to the girl's soul.

She nodded at him. "After this morning you'll never talk that way again. Now be a good boy and let me get you dolled up. We must look our prettiest. See my cap? My best one—in honor."

What was she running on about? Jimmie didn't know or care very much. Jollying him along, he supposed. Anyhow she was a dear; anything she wanted would go. He let himself be washed and shaved and dressed in fresh pajamas, and watched her deft hands as she put clean sheets on his bed and propped him on immaculate pillows. About then an orderly came in.

"They've come," the orderly said. "The doctor wants to speak to the nurse first."

Jimmie was mildly surprised at the brightness in the girl's eyes. She put her hand on his newly brushed red head.

"Don't you dare rumple your hair till I get back."

To his greater surprise she bent suddenly and kissed his hand, and her face was full of emotion as she lifted it. What was the girl up to? But Jimmie was languid, and misery was tearing at his mind; he did not follow out his wonder.

Out in the hall the nurse threw one awed

glance at a group standing near the door of the ward; then the doctor stepped toward her.

"Miss Gardiner, you told me last night that Corporal Blair believes himself to have failed in his duty?"

"Yes. From things he's said I know he thinks himself disgraced."

The doctor smiled. "What I'm after is that it might be dangerous in his weak state to disillusion him in"—the doctor's eyes travelled to the group of uniforms—"in this rather overpowering way. You can judge for the lad better than I can. Would the shock be too much? Had you better tell him what's going to happen?"

"No!" The head in its best cap shook firmly. "Why, doctor, if a man had a ten-ton load of lead on his chest, would you be afraid of the shock to him of lifting it off? Never. I wouldn't for worlds spoil the joy of that boy of hearing the glorious thing in that"—she flashed a quick glance at the uniforms waiting—"that glorious way."

The doctor turned. "Go to your patient, Miss Gardiner."

Jimmie, wondering weakly why the dickens his "sister," the one entity in the world which brought any comfort, was gone so long, beheld her in the doorway, so flushed and breathless a sister for all her self-control that it startled him. She came quickly and put a hand on his shining red hair as his mother might have done.

"Mr. Blair," she said, leaning to him—not "buddy" any more—"Mr. Blair, something wonderful and beautiful is going to happen. Get your mind ready to be prouder and happier than you ever were in your life."

Jimmie stared at her. Proud—he? Happy—he? And with that there was a stir at the door and a group of officers came in, and his heart gave a leap as his eyes, astounded, realized that the figure leading the others, this figure of the horizon-blue uniform, with one sleeve pinned flat, was no other than General Gouraud. Behind him followed close two or

three staff officers and the doctor and—why, it was old Dutch Cleanser, Colonel Fairfield —his own colonel. How had the old boy got that wounded arm? What was this distinguished lot doing here? All over the ward weak heads lifted, men pulled themselves up on their pillows, stared at the group entering; there was a sudden dramatic stir and silence everywhere.

Jimmie's face was grim as he gazed at his own colonel, and his heart beat painfully with shame. He longed to cover up his poor head with the sheet; but he gazed, pale and grim.

What in heaven's name was this? They were heading toward *him*—to *his* bed. With that they stood about him, close to him, and the general, the stern soldier whom his men adored to fanaticism, was smiling down at him with eyes as fatherly as Roosevelt's eyes might have been to a sick and wounded son. He was speaking; his gruff tones, too, made the boy think of his hero. What—WHAT—was General Gouraud saying? There was

some hideous slip here. Jimmie's stricken heart jumped with horror as he heard words in the great soldier's voice. "Heroism—conspicuous daring—France thanks you—" Jimmie tossed his red locks back, to meet the eyes of his nurse.

"For the love of Mike—stop 'em," he cried. Jimmie spoke French, but he could not speak this thing to General Gouraud in any language. "Tell 'em it's a mistake. It's some other fellow. I'm not the one. Tell 'em—I'm a—coward." He brought out the word desperately, in a manner of sob. Utter truth must be told here, though it bled his life out to tell it. No more slacking—at least that picture at home should not look contempt at him for that. "Stop 'em."

And the nurse, Jimmie's dear "sister," looked up at the one-armed general and spoke a few rapid words. Jimmie gave a shivering sigh. Now they would go and leave him quietly to fight his shame. What, in heaven's name, was the general doing now?

Kneeling by the hospital bed, holding the boy's skeleton hand in his one brown one, and speaking slowly in his own dramatic tongue.

"It is for me to tell you, then, my so brave American soldier, that you are no coward but a hero. One has guessed that the memory has gone—because of the wound and the shell-shock—of what you did. I, your general, will then be your memory. Volunteers were called for to get into contact with a French unit, separated and surrounded by enemy troops. It was necessary to localize their position, not only in order to save them but also in order that their own and American artillery should not unknowingly fire upon them. Each volunteer was to carry forward strapped to his back a field telephone and reel of wire, laying it as he ran; also an arranged signal for our aeroplanes of the contact patrol. The position of this surrounded unit was not defined except that to reach it a runner must traverse a barrage of interdic-

diction of a heaviness most extraordinary. You volunteered for this service."

Jimmie, very pale and shaking, very comforted, in spite of inner convictions, by that strong hand around his twitching fingers, nodded.

"Voilà! That he remembers," spoke the General smiling. "My brave soldier! But there is more to recount before he takes our word for his courage, this so stubborn American boy. You advanced, the volunteers, to the *tir de barrage*, and at what might be called the beginning of the danger zone, you stumbled and fell."

"I lay down," stated Jimmie distinctly. "I was afraid."

General Gouraud chuckled. "It is a reluctant hero, one sees," he commented. And went on. "You fell. Corporal Egan was by your side. A word passed between you, and you both sprang up and pressed forward into the barrage fire. Corporal Egan fell at once——"

"Egan dead?" Jimmie's voice was anguished, but the general reassured him.

"Not dead, indeed. Living and all but well at this moment. Yet he was disabled at that time. The other volunteers were killed, so that you alone won through; also, by some miracle, with the telephone wire uncut; also, you delivered your message. You were found to be badly wounded in the leg and to be suffering from shell-shock. You had crawled on all fours—*à quatre pattes*—for two hundred yards. Also, you did not lighten your passage by dropping the reel of great heaviness, as one might. At the end you became unconscious, and so remained till yesterday. You saved our troops and *le bon Dieu* saved you for that service. Will you now, my so obstinate hero, consent to receive the thanks which France sends you, with the *Médaille Militaire?*"

Jimmie was aware of a rough face touching him first on one cheek and then on the other, and while the room swam around he knew

that something heavy on a faded-looking yellow-and-green ribbon was being pinned on his pajama jacket. There were no definite edges to anything; he could not tell if he spoke or what he said, but the pageant of uniforms, that glorious figure with the empty sleeve, old Dutch Cleanser, and the rest somehow were gone. He was alone with "sister," and she was smoothing his hair rather steadily, while he tried to find that fresh handkerchief of earlier in the morning and kept on repeating to himself: "Blamed baby—oh, blamed baby!"

An orchestra was playing thundering hallelujahs under the pajama jacket, under the glory of that sickly-colored ribbon. And a name was the burden of the great music.

"Roosevelt! He saved me. Oh, his name saved me! Egan said it and I went on. I kept my promise to the Colonel, and he put me through!" Unphrased, wordless, such was the cantata of Jimmie's soul.

The nurse stopped smoothing his red head

and looked down at him with a queer expression he had not seen before in her brown eyes.

"Now you'll get well in five minutes and leave us," said the nurse.

And why in thunder, when she'd sat up nights and slaved daytimes to make him well, should she look wistful and sorry?

. . . . . .

There are always automobiles standing at the side of the road which runs past the Oyster Bay cemetery. The great American who sleeps there, under the trees of that peaceful hillside, is never without homage of Americans. On a soft April morning of 1919 when a line of five or six cars was drawn up at the edge of the road with its wide grass border, yet another car stopped, and from it stepped down a spectacled young man in uniform who limped. He was pale, and as he turned, after a moment's speech with his chauffeur, in the direction which the chauffeur had pointed out, he drew the overseas

cap from his head and the light shone on thick red hair. The *Médaille Militaire*, the highest honor in the gift of France, to be won only by enlisted men and by general officers —but by no rank between—hung on the breast of his blouse. As he walked, slowly enough, for he was lame and yet weak from wounds, and shell-shock makes a slow recovery, one or two quiet groups of people, coming back to their cars from Roosevelt's grave, looked at him, at the wound-stripe on his right sleeve, and then back tenderly to his young, worn face. In the boy's look was a quality which marked him as different from the ordinary reverent visitor. This gaunt, gray-faced youngster had an air of something which he meant to do. He stood apart quietly when he reached the spot under the trees, where the shadows of the dimly sunlit spring morning swept softly back and forth, back and forth, over all that was left of a strong body, the house of a strong soul.

"Earth to earth; ashes to ashes." Yet

Theodore Roosevelt's triumphant personality triumphed yet. "O, grave, where is thy victory?" Jimmie considered the words as he stood with bowed, bared head, and held his overseas cap crushed against his breast, as Roosevelt had held his hat crushed that day when the division marched up the avenue and those keen eyes, now forever closed, had gazed out at America's soldiers with a rapture of tenderness and pride. "O, grave, where is thy victory?"

For the spirit of the place was inspiration. From this place, as long as America lasted, Americans must go with a new breath of consecration to America; with a desire to serve the land with one's might, as Roosevelt would have it served.

"His soul goes marching on," whispered Jimmie, and remembered how that great soul had marched with himself through hardship and weariness in France, and had swept him by sheer power of a name through battle-flame and shell-fire.

Near this place might one day rise, the boy dreamed, a mighty flagstaff, the highest in the world it should be, as fitted the tribute of a great nation to its greatest son. And from this should float always, into the ages to come, the flag for which Theodore Roosevelt had spent himself; the flag which stood to him and stands to us for the last word in the cause which "shall not fail, for it is the cause of humanity."

People came and went; the minutes massed to hours as the lame soldier stood waiting. He was only twenty-four hours off the hospital-ship on which he had sailed ten days ago from St. Nazaire, just out of the Savenay hospital. There had been three things all the way across the Atlantic which had filled his mind and stood out as the beginning of his new life at home. His mother, and then his people; less sharply defined, yet guarded happily, a name and address near New York, the name and address of the nurse who was an angel! Beside these two was the thing

which he was doing to-day. Would these ever-coming people never go?

At last for a space of time Jimmie stood alone in the hushed, bright place; all the quiet footsteps had gone away over the gravel; the wind whispered unhurried memories through the trees, memories of a small boy fishing and of a personage who had played and fished and talked with him through an unforgotten hour; memories of light feet marching in a great rhythm up the avenue, and of a face looking down at them—a second's glance to be remembered for a lifetime.

Jimmie came forward with his halting step and stood by the grave. He dropped his brown cap on the earth, and with stumbling fingers unpinned his most precious possession, the *Médaille Militaire*, and knelt and laid it above where Roosevelt's heart might have been.

"It's the best thing I own. It's yours anyhow," he whispered. "I kept my promise,

Colonel." A moment he bent his head and a tear fell on the dim yellow-and-green ribbon of the medal lying among flowers.

Then Jimmie picked up his cap and went back under the trees to his taxi, no badge of honor on his breast now, limping and gaunt and very tired, but with a deep contentment in him to be one of the Americans who had not failed the cause which was the cause of humanity.